

CONGRESSWOMAN LOUISE M. SLAUGHTER

STANDING FOR COMMON SENSE GUN CONTROL

The severity and frequency of gun-related tragedies have left our nation in an almost constant state of mourning. The United States Constitution guarantees our right to keep and bear arms; and while we can all acknowledge this basic right, Louise strongly supports sensible proposals to prevent those who would misuse firearms from obtaining them and limit the availability of firearms that have no legitimate sporting or civilian use.

Unfortunately, our nation's gun lobby and their allies in Congress refuse to have an open and honest conversation about how to protect the rights of responsible gun owners, while being equally vigilant in protecting the rights of all Americans to assemble in peace.

Limiting Large Capacity Ammo Clips

Louise is an original cosponsor of H.R. 308, the Large Capacity Ammunition Feeding Device Act (the house companion bill to Senator Lautenberg's bill in the Senate). The legislation would prohibit the transfer, importation, or possession of high-capacity ammunition magazines such as those used in the Aurora, Colorado massacre and the Tucson, Arizona murders and assassination attempt on former Rep. Gabby Giffords. These high capacity clips were banned under federal law for 10 years until the Federal Assault Weapons Ban expired in 2004. Now, only six states – including New York – and the District of Columbia limit the capacity of these magazines.

Closing the Fire Sale Loophole

Louise is also a cosponsor of H.R. 263, the Fire Sale Loophole Closing Act, which would close a loophole in America's federal firearms laws that allows emotionally disturbed individuals and convicted criminals to purchase guns without a background check. The legislation addresses the so-called fire-sale loophole, which allows gun dealers whose licenses have been revoked by the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives (ATF) to convert their entire business inventories of firearms into personal collections and then liquidate the firearms in unregulated fire sales.

Opposing National Concealed Carry

Louise opposed H.R. 822, legislation to impose national reciprocity for concealed weapons, when it passed the House by a vote of 272 to 154 on November 16, 2011. The legislation would force law enforcement to recognize concealed handgun permits issued by every other state, including states with extremely weak regulations concerning screening and training. This would allow individuals to carry even when they do not meet the standards for carrying a concealed handgun in the state they are visiting. Currently, 38 states deny concealed carry by people convicted of certain dangerous misdemeanors, 29 states deny concealed carry by alcohol abusers, and 35 states require applicants to complete gun safety training. All these laws would be eviscerated under H.R. 822.

Standing Against Gun Violence in Places of Worship

In the 111th Congress, Louise introduced H.Res. 505, a resolution condemning the murder of Dr. George Tiller who was shot to death in his church in Wichita, Kansas on May 31, 2009, and offering sincere condolences to his family. On June 9, 2009, H.Res. 505 unanimously passed the House by a vote of 423 to 0. While violence is always deplorable, this event was particularly wretched because it took place in a house of worship, a refuge for those who seek serenity in times of turmoil and safety in times of hostility.

Ultimately, our nation requires a mix of improved mental health services, improved information sharing among authorities, and a stricter control of the sale and possession of guns. Yet if we can't even debate gun control legislation in our halls of Congress, then we will never be able to ensure that our children can go to school, to church or to the local grocery store and return safely home.